

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 SSM-03 TRSE-00 OMB-01 ACDA-12
MCT-01 AID-05 NEAE-00 IO-13 HA-05 EB-08 COME-00
AGRE-00 /108 W

-----060112 311528Z /45

O R 311405Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7385
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 1788

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI ASEC LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION, MARCH 31, 1200 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 1742 (DTG 301100Z MAR 78)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE CEASE-FIRE IS STILL GENERALLY
HOLDING, BUT GEORGE HABBASH PUBLICLY REJECTED A CEASE-
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FIRE. FRENCH FORCES HAVE STILL NOT TAKEN CONTROL OF THE
QASIMIYAH BRIDGE NORTH OF TYRE. Wafa SAID THAT SYRIA
HAS NOT PREVENTED AID FROM REACHING THE PALESTINIAN
RESISTANCE. SYRIAN WHEAT ARRIVED FOR THE GOL. SAMIR
SABBAGH AND GEORGE HAWI CRITICIZED THE COMPOSITION OF UNIFIL.
CAMILLE CHAMOUN DEFENDED SA'D HADDAD. NATIONAL BLOC
LEADER RAYMOND EDDE CALLED FOR CANCELLATION OF THE

CAIRO ACCORDS. THE CITRUS AND TOBACCO CROPS IN SOUTH LEBANON ARE IN DANGER. END SUMMARY.

2. MILITARY SITUATION.

A. THE CEASEFIRE IS STILL GENERALLY HOLDING. Wafa's MARCH 30 ENGLISH LANGUAGE BULLETIN FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE MARCH 15 ISRAELI INVASION CARRIED NO REPORTS OF MILITARY ACTIVITY IN SOUTH LEBANON. NEVERTHELESS, IKE REPORTED THAT REJECTIONISTS NEAR THE HASBAYA BRIDGE OVER THE HASBANI RIVER WERE FIRING MORTARS SOUTH ON MARCH 30. ACCORDING TO IKE, A LOCAL AREA COMMANDER NAMED ABU FATUL, WHO IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS A MEMBER OF THE PFLP/GC, SAID: "WE ARE FIRING 200-300 ROUNDS EVERY DAY TO PREVENT THE INVADING ISRAELIS FROM ESTABLISHING ANY BASES."

B. IKE ALSO QUOTED "AN OFFICIAL" OF THE PLO AS SAYING THAT FEDAYEEN HAD "STOPPED SHOOTING FROM FIXED POSITIONS, BUT REAR GUARD ACTION AND HIT AND RUN RAIDS BEHIND ENEMY LINES IN THE OCCUPIED SOUTH ARE NOT COVERED BY THE CEASE-FIRE ORDER." IKE CITED PALESTINIAN SOURCES AS SAYING FATAH WOULD RESPECT THE CEASE-FIRE, BUT THE REJECTIONISTS WOULD NOT.

3. HABBASH REJECTS CEASE-FIRE.
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PFLP LEADER GEORGE HABBASH AND PLO CHIEF YASIR ARAFAT APPEARED TOGETHER AT A PUBLIC RALLY IN BEIRUT ON MARCH 30 (SEPTTEL). HABBASH, THE PRINCIPAL REJECTIONIST LEADER, REJECTED "ANYTHING CALLED A CEASE-FIRE" FOR SOUTH LEBANON. ARAFAT APPARENTLY DID NOT ADDRESS THE ISSUE.

4. UNIFIL ACTIVITIES.

FRENCH FORCES HAVE STILL NOT TAKEN CONTROL OF QASIMIYAH BRIDGE NORTH OF TYRE. MEANWHILE, A FRENCH CORPORAL WAS ACCIDENTALLY SHOT IN THE CHEST BY A FELLOW FRENCH SOLDIER ON MARCH 30. THE WOUNDED SOLDIER WAS FLOWN TO A HOSPITAL IN HAIFA WHERE HE WAS REPORTED IN SATISFACTORY CONDITION. HE IS THE FOURTH UNIFIL CASUALTY. THE FIRST WAS A FRENCHMAN WOUNDED BY SHRAPNEL ON MARCH 28. A SWEDISH SOLDIER WAS KILLED AND ANOTHER WOUNDED ON MARCH 29.

5. Wafa ON SYRIAN AID.

Wafa ON MARCH 30 CITED "AN AUTHORITATIVE INFORMATION

SOURCE OF THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION" IN BEIRUT AS SAYING: "WE CONFIRM THAT THE SYRIAN AUTHORITIES CONTINUE TO ALLOW THE PASSAGE OF ALL AID DESTINED TO THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION VIA SYRIAN TERRITORY AND THAT IT FURTHERMORE GRANTS SPECIAL FACILITIES IN THIS REGARD." (THE ADF ON MARCH 24 HAD ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE FORBIDDING THE ENTRY OF ANY MILITARY MATERIAL AND PERSONNEL INTO LEBANON FROM ABROAD. RADIO DAMASCUS ON MARCH 26, HOWEVER, DENIED THAT SYRIA WOULD PREVENT AID FROM REACHING THE PALESTINIANS.)

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 1788

6. SYRIAN WHEAT.

ACCORDING TO AN ADF COMMUNIQUE, FORTY TRUCKS CARRYING WHEAT AS AID FROM SYRIA TO LEBANON ENTERED

LEBANON VIA AL MASNA ON MARCH 29. MORE CONVOYS ARE EXPECTED IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, AND THE TOTAL AID IS EXPECTED TO BE MORE THAN 7,000 TONS, BEIRUT RADIO REPORTED.

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7. FRENCH AND IRANIANS CRITICIZED.

TWO LEFTIST LEBANESE POLITICIANS CRITICIZED THE COMPOSITION OF UNIFIL IN PARIS NEWSPAPER INTER-VIEWS. AL MURABITUN OFFICIAL SAMIR SABBAGH TOLD LE MATIN THAT: "WE FEAR THERE IS A NEW PLOT AGAINST THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE. . . THE INSTRUMENTS OF WHICH WILL BE FRENCH AND IRANIAN. . ." LEBANESE COMMUNIST PARTY CHIEF GEORGES HAWI TOLD L'HUMANITE THAT: "THE FRENCH TROOPS ARE MUCH MORE CONCERNED WITH NEUTRALIZING LEBANESE PROGRESSIVE FORCES AND PALESTINIAN FORCES THAN WITH PUSHING ISRAELI TROOPS OUT OF LEBANON AS CALLED FOR BY THE U.N. RESOLUTION."

8. SA'D HADDAD.

PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS TOLD THE PRESS ON MARCH 30 THAT LEBANESE AUTHORITIES WERE STUDYING THE QUESTION OF SA'D HADDAD, THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA COMMANDER IN SOUTH LEBANON. ACCORDING TO THE BEIRUT PRESS THE SAME DAY, CAMILLE CHAMOUN DEFENDED HADDAD, SAYING THAT THE LATTER'S "DEFENSE OF SOME TOWNS IN SOUTH LEBANON IS THE ONLY THING THAT SAVED THEM FROM THE FATE OF DAMOUR."

9. EDDE ON CAIRO ACCORDS.

NATIONAL BLOC LEADER RAYMOND EDDE TELEPHONED SUPPORTERS IN BEIRUT ON MARCH 30 AND SAID THAT "ALL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND ALL OFFICIALS MUST DEMAND A CANCELLATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORDS TO FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 425,"

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LOCAL NEWSPAPERS REPORTED. EDDE ADDED THAT THE CAIRO ACCORDS WOULD GIVE ISRAEL "ALL THE PRETEXT IT NEEDED TO LAUNCH FURTHER ATTACKS ON LEBANON."

10. SOUTHERN CROP IN DANGER.

A. MOHAMMED ZAATANI, THE CHAIRMAN OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY OF SOUTH LEBANON, TOLD THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IKE ON MARCH 30 THAT LEBANON STANDS TO LOSE ABOUT \$30 MILLION WORTH OF UNHARVESTED CITRUS FOOD AND TOBACCO IN SOUTH LEBANON. HE SAID THAT ABOUT HALF OF THE COUNTRY'S ESTIMATED 250,000 TONS OF CITRUS HAD BEEN PICKED BEFORE THE ISRAELI INVASION AND THAT THE REMAINDER WOULD HAVE TO BE PICKED BY THE END OF APRIL. "IF THE ISRAELIS DO NOT EVACUATE THE SOUTH BEFORE THE END OF APRIL, THE FRUITS WILL BE PLAGUED AND DAMAGED," HE WARNED.

B. MEANWHILE PARLIAMENTARY DEPUTIES FROM SOUTH LEBANON HAVE ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO GIVE \$10 MILLION IN AID TO TOBACCO FARMERS WHO FAILED TO CULTIVATE THEIR FIELDS BECAUSE OF THE ISRAELI INVASION. ACCORDING TO IKE, NEWSMEN VISITING FRONT LINE POSITIONS REPORTED MANY ORANGE AND LEMON TREES HAD BEEN UPROOTED BY THE ISRAELIS.

PARKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMISTICE, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT01788
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780140-0310
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 1742
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3277334
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE SITUATION, MARCH 31, 1200 HOURS LOCAL
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/048a7cc4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014